

VII.—Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.

1. 'Annals of the Transvaal Museum.'

[Annals of the Transvaal Museum. Vol. I. No. 4. August 1909 Pretoria.]

The only ornithological papers in the fourth number of this new periodical * are two by Mr. Haagner—a "Revision" of the difficult group of South African Grass-Warblers (*Cisticola*) and a description of two new birds from Portuguese East Africa. Of *Cisticola* Mr. Haagner recognises 19 species, one of which (*C. pretoriæ*) is described as new. The two birds from Portuguese East Africa are named *Anthoscopus robertsi* and *Heliolais kirbyi*.

2. 'Aquila,' Vol. xv. 1908.

[Aquila. Zeitschrift für Ornithologie. Redact. Otto Herman. Tom. xv. Budapest, 1908.]

Our Hungarian contemporary has now completed its fifteenth volume, and we have received a copy of it, together with separate copies of some of the papers. As was to be expected, the Organ of the "Central Bureau of Hungarian Ornithology" is mostly devoted to the Birds of Hungary, but should by no means be neglected by the student of the European Ornis who is able to avail himself of the German translation printed in parallel columns with the Magyar text.

After a disquisition on the burning question how the study of the "flight of Birds" may help the experiments now being carried out on the "flight of Man," there comes a series of communications from numerous correspondents on various subjects relating to the Hungarian Ornis, among which migration holds an important part. Amongst these we find a paper by our friend Mr. R. B. Lodge on his experiences with the Eagles and Vultures of the Carpathians during a short visit which he paid to that district in September 1908. This article is illustrated by some excellent photographic plates of Golden Eagles and Griffon Vultures.

* Cf. 'The Ibis,' 1909, p. 695.

It appears that the Hungarian ornithologists have already taken up the plan of marking captured birds with metal rings, as pursued at Rossitten, on which we find an instructive report by Mr. J. Schenk. The birds chiefly operated upon were Storks, Spoonbills, Gulls, and Night-Herons.

3. 'The Auk.'

[The Auk. A Quarterly Journal of Ornithology. July, October, 1909.]

In the July number Mr. C. W. Richmond concludes his reprint of the ornithological portion of the writings of C. S. Rafinesque, which include papers and pamphlets in French, English, and Italian. According to his views, some of our present generic and specific names require alteration in consequence of Rafinesque's writings. Dr. C. W. Townsend contributes an interesting article on the use of the wings and feet by diving birds, with remarks on those that use the wings under water and those that do not; he also writes fully on the invasion of New England by the Carolina Wren. Mr. S. Trotter discusses the geological and geographical relations of the land-birds of North-eastern America, their modifications, the alteration of their habits or habitats, and, in short, their change of status generally. Mr. Ruthven Deane gives the history of the unique specimen of Townsend's Bunting from a copy of the original manuscript sent by Townsend to Audubon. Mr. A. H. Felger furnishes an annotated list of the Water-birds of Weld, Morgan, and Adams counties in Colorado, with three maps; and Mr. W. P. Taylor discusses hybridisation in Humming-birds, in consequence of having shot what he believes to be a hybrid. Lastly, we have the fifteenth Supplement to the A. O. U. 'Check-List,' of which a new edition is about to be published. In this we notice that it is proposed to substitute *Cryptoglaux* for *Glaux*, *Machetes* for *Pavoncella*, *Chamepelia* for *Columbigallina*, *Archilochus* for *Trochilus*, *Anmodramus* for *Coturniculus*, *Passerherbulus* for *Anmodramus*, and *Vermivora* for *Helminthophila*. There are also changes in the titles of the families and subfamilies to

suit the American avifauna; and *Falco tinnunculus* is excluded. Several proposed changes of generic and specific names, however, are not accepted. The list as a whole should be consulted by our readers.

In the October number Mr. S. Trotter conducts an interesting "Inquiry into the history of the current English names of North American land-birds," beginning with a "Nomina Avium of Arch. Ælfric" (955-1020 A.D.) and descending through eleventh and fifteenth century lists to the days of Catesby, Bartram, Barton, Kulm, Wilson, and later writers. Mr. S. Stansell writes on the birds of Central Alberta, describing the style of the country and the species found there, and incidentally the nests of *Totanus solitarius* and *Hesperiphona vespertina*. Mr. T. S. Roberts gives us a life-study of an American bird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) in its breeding-colonies, with nine excellent photographs; Mr. E. Blackwelder furnishes a list of the birds observed in Iron County, Michigan, during a three months' geological survey in summer; Mr. H. W. Wright notices the nesting of *Vermivora pinus* in Massachusetts: and Dr. J. Dwight, Junr., retells the extraordinary story of the Black Duck (cf. 'Auk,' 1909, p. 175), proving that the red-legged form is merely the adult of the brown-legged. Finally, Mr. W. W. Cooke gives his third Supplement to the "Birds of Colorado," with a bibliography of Coloradan ornithology; it extends over 22 pages, and forms a valuable addition to his former publications on the subject.

4. 'Avicultural Magazine.'

[Avicultural Magazine. The Journal of the Avicultural Society. New Series. Vol. vii. Nos. 11, 12 (September, October, 1909).]

These two numbers contain useful articles on the habits of the following species in captivity, with notes on the breeding of most of them:—*Phalaropus hyperboreus* (received from Iceland, by Mr. C. B. Smith), *Monticola saxatilis* and *Estrilda angolensis* (by Mr. R. Phillipps), *Myiadestes townsendi* and *Cissopis leveriana* (by Mr. H. D. Astley),

Spermestes nigriceps and *Tharrhaleus jerdoni* (by Mr. W. E. Teschemaker), *Trachyphonus cafer* (with a good coloured plate) by Major B. R. Horsbrugh, and *Neophema venusta* (by Mr. W. A. Fasey).

Dr. A. G. Butler discusses the question of morality in Birds; Mr. F. Finn continues his notes on "Aviculture at the Zoo" (in which special attention is drawn to the splendid Eagle *Pithecophaga jefferyi* and two fine males of *Paradisæa apoda* received from Sir W. Ingram), and gives us a further instalment of his "Stray Notes on Indian Birds," with a note (p. 331) on the warty heel-pads of two species of Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus macii* and *Brachypternus aurantius*).

In the "Correspondence" Mr. E. J. Brook furnishes a list of rare birds now in his aviaries, brought by Mr. Goodfellow from New Guinea.

5. *Bonhote on Migration.*

[Migration Notes from North Holland. By J. Lewis Bonhote. *Ornis*, 1909, pp. 162-173.]

These Notes are the result of two visits made by our fellow-member to Holland, the first in the last week of August 1906, and the second for a month in the autumn of 1908. One of the North Sea islands was selected, and six miles of sandy and muddy shore brought under observation. A considerable number of species were noticed, but no great "rushes" were chronicled, a fact possibly due to the weather, which was summer-like, with light breezes. Mr. Bonhote's conclusions are as follows:—(1) That migration is usually undertaken in small parties rather than in large flocks; (2) that the number of species migrating on any particular day varies inversely as the barometric pressure; (3) that migratory birds are excessively fat on their departure, and thin on their arrival; (4) that among the Limicolæ the balance of evidence is in favour of the adults migrating earlier than the bulk of the young.

6. *Cory on the Birds of the Leeward Islands.*

[The Birds of the Leeward Islands, Caribbean Sea. By Charles B. Cory, Curator of Department of Zoology. Field Mus. Nat. Hist. Publ. No. 157. Orn. Ser. Vol. i. No. 5, Chicago, 1909.]

With the assistance of his colleagues at the Field Museum, Chicago, Mr. Charles B. Cory, who has laboured so long and so well on the ornithology of the Antilles, has been able to prepare an excellent summary of the present state of our knowledge of the birds of the Leeward Islands. Under this designation are included the islands called Aruba, Curaçao, Bonaire, Islas de Aves, Los Roques, Orchilla, Tortuga, Blanquilla, Los Hermanos, Testigos, and Margarita. Besides the specimens obtained by the two expeditions sent out by the Field Museum, other species previously recorded from these islands have been included in the list.

The islands are taken one by one, and after a short introduction and a notice of previous authorities, a list of species recorded as found on each is given. The islands lie along the north coast of Venezuela, and the birds are nearly all Venezuelan in form, although they have, in some cases, become sufficiently differentiated to require (according to the prevailing fashion) subspecific names. Mr. Cory now gives such names to *Dendræca ruficapilla obscura* (Los Roques); *Conurus æruginosus tortugensis*, *Tiaris tortugensis*, and *Cæreba ferryi* (Tortuga); *Holoquiscalus orchillensis* (Orchilla); *Conurus neoxenus* and *Platycichla venezuelensis atra* (Margarita).

As we have said, the birds of the Leeward group are all Venezuelan or slightly modified Venezuelan forms, the only characteristic Antillean form met with there being *Margarops fuscatus*, which is "common in the gardens" on Bonaire.

A table of the species and subspecies, shewing their exact distribution, of the Leeward-Islands Birds is a useful addition to this memoir, and an outline map gives the exact position of the various islands.

7. *Dearborn on Birds from Guatemala.*

[Catalogue of a Collection of Birds from Guatemala. By Ned Dearborn, Assistant Curator of Ornithology. Chicago, 1907. Field Mus. of N. H. Publ. 125. Orn. Ser. Vol. i. No. 3.]

Mr. Dearborn bases his paper on three collections made for the "Field-Museum" of Natural History, in Chicago, and containing altogether 1187 specimens, which are referred to 305 species and subspecies. The principal collection was made by Mr. Dearborn himself in 1906. The author commences by an exact list of the localities which he visited in Guatemala, and devotes several pages to a description of their physical peculiarities.

The labours of the late Osbert Salvin and others, as explained in the 'Biologia Centrali-Americana,' have made us well acquainted with the Ornithology of Guatemala. Mr. Dearborn has, therefore, as was to be expected, found few novelties in his series, and has described only four as new: *Saucerottea cyanura guatemalæ*, *Diglossa montana*, *Regulus satrapa clarus*, and *Planesticus tristis rubicundus*. The last-named is based on a single specimen—how can anyone decide that it is not an individual variety?

Some short notes on the habits, exact localities, and other peculiarities are added under each species.

8. *Dewar and Finn on the Making of Species.*

[The Making of Species. By Douglas Dewar, B.A. (Cantab), I.C.S., F.Z.S., and Frank Finn, B.A. (Oxon), F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. London: John Lane, 1909.]

This work, which contains an examination into the more recent researches and theories of the cause or causes of Evolution, has been prepared by an Indian Civil Servant, Mr. Douglas Dewar, who has devoted his leisure time in India to zoological study and observation, and by a well-known writer of popular works of Natural History, Mr. Frank Finn. The authors regard Evolution as a theory now universally accepted, and devote most of their space to the discussion of the various explanations which have been

suggested as likely to bring about the changes in animals and plants that have undoubtedly occurred.

The authors divide the Evolutionists of to-day into three schools, which they term the Neo-Lamarckian, the Wallaceian, and the Neo-Darwinian. Of these the first, represented by Cope, Spencer, Cunningham, Haeckel, and Naegeli, do not believe that Natural Selection is the important factor in the Evolutionary process, and that acquired characters can be and often are inherited. The Wallaceians, represented by Weismann, Poulton, and apparently by Lankester, believe in the all-sufficiency of Natural Selection to explain everything, and deny that acquired characters can ever be inherited. The third school, the Neo-Darwinians, to which the authors claim to belong, and in which they include Bateson, De Vries, Kellogg, and T. H. Morgan, steer a middle course, and, though still laying stress on the great importance of Natural Selection, believe that there are many other factors of importance to be taken into consideration.

The book is illustrated by a number of uncoloured plates to shew examples of phenomena among birds, such as recognition-marks, mimicry, and sexual and seasonal dimorphism. There is not much novelty in it, but it is worth reading by those who are interested in the subject, as containing a mass of information on the question of the origin of species brought together from different quarters. Birds are specially alluded to in the chapters on "Mutation" and "Hybridism."

9. *Dresser on Palæarctic Birds' Eggs.*

[Eggs of the Birds of Europe, including all the Species inhabiting the Western Palæarctic Area. By H. E. Dresser. Pts. XIX.-XX. September, 1909.]

Mr. Dresser is now fast approaching the termination of his labours, though he finds that two more parts will be necessary to complete this work, owing to an unexpected accumulation of material during its progress, and more particularly to new discoveries in Northern Asia. Several

very important species find their places in the present instalment, such as the Knot, of which authentic eggs are now figured for the first time in Britain, though eagerly sought for many years, the Curlew Sandpiper, of which the same might have been said before Mr. Popham's journey to the mouth of the Yenesei, and the Solitary Sandpiper. The Knots' eggs were obtained by the Russian Polar Expedition, and the present plate is a reproduction from the memoir of that Expedition (in Russian), that of the Curlew Sandpipers' eggs is from the same source, while those of the Solitary Sandpiper are figured from North Albertan specimens. The excellent notes of Mr. Buturlin on the birds of the Russian Empire are even more interesting than usual in these Parts, and add greatly to our knowledge of the range of many forms in Asia, while the plates are excellent and give an adequate idea of the variation in colour of the eggs, though possibly those of the Knot will prove less uniform than might be supposed from the specimens figured, which were all taken in the same district.

The woodcuts of nests are not quite of the same merit: some have come out badly, with the eggs almost white or far too dark.

10. *Dubois on Buceros sharpii.*

[Comment on doit envisager le type du *Buceros sharpii* de Elliot. Par le Dr. Alph. Dubois. Bull. Soc. Zool. de France, xxxiv. p. 129 (1909).]

In 1884 Dr. Dubois described and figured, under the name *Buceros (Bycanistes) leucopygus*, a Hornbill, of which two specimens had been obtained by Bohndorff in the Nyam-Nyam district of Central Africa. Dr. Reichenow has referred this species to *B. sharpii* of Elliot, and various other authors have misplaced it. M. Dubois now explains this at full length, and finds that *leucopygus* of Giebel (*Zeitsch. ges. Nat.* xlvii. p. 73, 1876) is the correct specific name of this Hornbill, which is most nearly allied to *B. fistulator*.

We shall be glad to know whether Mr. D. G. Elliot agrees with Dr. Dubois's views on this subject. Dr. Dubois states

that *B. sharpii*, of which the typical specimen is in the British Museum, is merely a slight variety of a young male *B. fistulator*.

11. Elliot on the Species of *Rheinardtius*.

[Remarks on the Species of the Genus *Rheinardtius*. By D. G. Elliot, D.Sc., F.R.S.E., &c. Ann. Nat. Hist. ser. 8, vol. iv. p. 242 (1909).]

Mr. Elliot has lately examined the famous tail-feather in the Paris Museum upon which the name *Rheinardtius ocellatus* was established, and has compared it with specimens of the long tail-feathers of the birds from Annam which are usually called by that name. Mr. Elliot doubts whether this identification is correct, because he finds certain differences (which are carefully pointed out) between the typical feather and the corresponding feather of the form from Annam. Mr. Elliot, however, has omitted to mention that a "subspecies" of the Annamese bird has lately been found in Pahang, far down the Malay Peninsula, and described under the name *R. ocellatus nigrescens* by Mr. Rothschild (Bull. B. O. C. xii. p. 55, 1902). It is possible, therefore, that the original tail-feather may belong to this "subspecies"—at any rate, the comparison should be made.

12. Grinnell on Three new Song-Sparrows.

[Three new Song-Sparrows from California. By Joseph Grinnell. Univ. of Cal. Zool. Publ. vol. v. no. 9.]

Mr. Grinnell is preparing a revision of the Western Song-Sparrows (*Melospiza*), of which he recognises "seventeen distinct races." Three of these are now described as *M. melodia maxillaris*, *M. m. gouldi* (revived name), and *M. m. saltonis*.

13. Grinnell on Birds from Alaska.

[Birds and Mammals of the 1907 Alexander Expedition to South-eastern Alaska. Univ. of Cal. Zool. Publ. vol. iii. no. 2.—Birds by Joseph Grinnell.]

The "Alexander Expedition" of 1907 appears to have been "got up," equipped, and "led" by a lady—Miss Annie M.

Alexander,—for the investigation of the Fauna of the Islands of South-eastern Alaska, and to have been very successfully carried out. The Expedition obtained 532 birds and 33 sets of eggs, besides other objects, all of which have been presented by Miss Alexander to the "Museum of Vertebrate Zoology." The exact localities visited are fully described by Messrs. Stephens and Dixon and are shown on a map of the Sitkan district of Alaska. The birds collected are carefully described by Mr. Grinnell, the Editor of 'The Condor,'—a very competent authority on the Avifauna of the Western States,—and copious field-notes are furnished from the note-books of the Naturalists of the Expedition.

Mr. Grinnell refers the 532 bird-skins to 99 species, amongst which he describes the following as new:—*Lagopus alexandræ*, *L. dixonii*, *Buteo borealis alascensis*, *Picoides americanus fumipectus*, *Loxia curvirostra sitkensis*, and *Planesticus migratorius caurinus*. The nomenclature and arrangement of the 'Check-list' are followed.

14. *La Touche on the Birds in the Shanghai Museum.*

[The Collection of Birds in the Shanghai Museum. By J. D. D. La Touche. North China Branch R. Asiatic Society, xi. p. 69 (1909).]

The difficulty of keeping up a collection of birds in a tropical climate is very obvious, but that it may be overcome by well-applied energy we may see from Mr. La Touche's report on the Shanghai Museum, of which Institution he has had charge for two years. He found it in a sad state from want of care, but has already renovated it to a great extent, and evidently intends to persevere in his good work. There is a mounted collection of Birds, now brought into good order, and containing 571 specimens of 359 species. The skin-collection contains 1120 specimens of 330 species. The total number of Chinese species represented at Shanghai is about 430. Among the mountain-birds of the province of Fohkien are examples of such rarities as *Drymochares sinensis*, *Proparus guttaticollis*, and *Allotrius pallidus*. There are also specimens of such little-known birds as

Pteruthius ricketti, *Alcippe hueti*, *Stachyridopsis sinensis*, and *Schœniparus superciliaris*. Amongst recent additions is recorded an example of Gould's Merganser (*Mergus squamatus*), of which there are only three specimens (including the type) in the British Museum, and, we believe, none elsewhere. A complete list of the names of all the species in the Shanghai Museum is given.

15. *Lodge on the Birds of Wild Europe.*

[Bird-hunting through Wild Europe. By R. B. Lodge. London: R. Cully, 1909. Pp. 1-333; 124 illustrations.]

In this book we have no need to descant upon the excellence of the photographs, as Mr. Lodge's skill in this art is well-known to all our readers, but we wish in the present case to call special attention to the scientific aspect of the subject on which he writes, since it is much more prominent than is usual in a popular work. The detailed descriptions of the birds at their breeding-quarters, of their nests and eggs, coupled with an admirable account of the surroundings, and of the countries and peoples visited, is such as to commend itself to every Ornithologist, while the fact that the bird-hunting was indeed in "Wild Europe," and the rarity of many of the species that came under Mr. Lodge's observation, combine to impress us with the scientific value of the letterpress. The difficulties he surmounted can hardly be overrated, yet they were not allowed to interfere with the success that was finally attained, while the list of species at the end of the volume clearly shews how great that success was.

Mr. Lodge first describes a visit to Southern Spain in company with a fellow-member of the B. O. U., easily recognisable under the initial M—; he next gives an account of journeys to Bosnia, Montenegro and Albania, with a short stay, as an interlude, in Hungary; the chief objects of his search being the breeding-places of the Dalmatian Pelican and the Great White Heron, though many other rare species were observed and photographed. Finally, collections were made in the Dobrudscha, at the

mouth of the Danube. Success was ultimately obtained in all cases, while Birds-of-Prey and marsh-breeding birds were the most conspicuous companions of the author's travels. No one who wishes to be well acquainted with the habits of European birds, including many rare species on the British list, should neglect to consult this admirable book.

16. *Lönnerberg on Birds from Transbaicalia and Mongolia.*

[Notes on Birds collected by Mr. Otto Bamberg in Southern Transbaicalia and Northern Mongolia. By Einar Lönnerberg. Upsala and Stockholm, 1909. (Arch. f. Zoologi, Bd. v. no. 9.)]

This is an account of the birds collected by Mr. Bamberg, of Weimar, during an expedition made into Northern Mongolia and the adjoining parts of Transbaicalia, and now deposited, for the most part, in the Museum of Stockholm. It commences with a list of the localities visited, which are illustrated by some nice photographs of the scenery, and explained in descriptive notes. The localities are given in the order in which they were visited, commencing with Kjachta and concluding with Urga. The birds collected by Mr. Bamberg consist of about 90 species and subspecies, and in some cases are of considerable interest, such as *Corvus dauricus neglectus* (cf. Salvadori, 'Ibis,' 1909, p. 134), *Garrulus glandarius bambergi* (subsp. nov. of the group of *G. brandti*), *Dendrocopus major mongolus* (subsp. nov.), *Upupa epops saturata* (subsp. nov.), and *Macrorhamphus tuczanowskii* (cf. Dresser, 'Ibis,' 1909, p. 418), a male specimen of which "in full breeding-plumage" was procured at Bura.

Mr. Lönnerberg, we regret to observe, is another advocate for changing old-established names, and wishes to call the Spotted Flycatcher "*Muscicapa ficedula*," as being the *Motacilla ficedula* of Linnæus's tenth edition. But this identification is doubtful, and we prefer *Muscicapa grisola*, which is certain.

17. *Macpherson on the Golden Eagle.*

[The Home-Life of a Golden Eagle. Photographed and described by H. B. Macpherson. London: Witherby & Co., 1909, pp. 1-45, 32 pls. 5s. net.]

Mr. Macpherson here gives us an exhaustive and most excellent account of his observations at the eyry of a Golden Eagle in the Grampians. To devote the whole of a book to a single species might seem, at first sight, unnecessary, but on reading the letter-press we are bound to confess that in this case the author has fully justified his action, and that there is not a word which we would willingly have omitted, while our own experiences, so far as they go, exactly tally with his. From April 23rd, when the eggs were hard-set, Mr. Macpherson constantly visited the nest until the young Eagle left it, during a period of no less than eleven weeks, and some idea of the toil involved in the undertaking may be gained from considering the weather that usually prevails—and as a matter of fact did prevail—at that time of year in the corries of the Scottish mountains. The photographs are most successful, and include excellent pictures of the cock, the hen, and the young bird in all stages of growth.

18. *North on Cinclusoma marginatum.*

[Description of the Female with Nest and Eggs of the Cinnamon-chested Ground-Thrush (*Cinclusoma marginatum* Sharpe). By Alfred J. North, C.M.B O.U. Rec. Austr. Mus. vii. no. 4 (1809).]

The male of *Cinclusoma marginatum* was described by Dr. Bowdler Sharpe in 1883 from a skin obtained in N.W. Australia. Mr. North now describes the female, nest, and eggs obtained by Mr. C. G. Gibson, Assistant Geologist, at Willuna, Western Australia, and adds notes on the range, nesting, and eggs of the species. A photographic plate is given of the nest and eggs.

19. *North on a new Acanthiza.*

[Description of a new Species of *Acanthiza* from Western Australia. By Alfred J. North, C.M.Z.S. Vict. Nat. xxvi. no. 6 (1909).]

In a small collection of birds obtained in the vicinity of

Lake Way, East Morrison District, Western Australia, and sent to him for determination, Mr. North has found three examples of an apparently new species of *Acanthiza*, which he describes under the name *A. whitlocki*.

In the same collection Mr. North found specimens of *Cinclosoma marginatum*, *Acanthiza robustirostris*, and *Climacteris superciliosa*, all "interesting forms."

20. *Report of the Zoological Society of New York.*

[Thirteenth Annual Report of the New York Zoological Society. New York, 1909.]

As stated on the the titlepage of their Report, the worthy objects of the Zoological Society of New York are to maintain a public zoological park, to preserve the natural Fauna of their country, and to promote Zoology. The readers of the Thirteenth Annual Report will easily settle how far the founders of this great enterprise have carried out these objects. It appears to us that at all events they made very good progress in 1908. Let us see what has been done in the Bird-department, which is ruled by Mr. C. William Beebe—a name well known to many of us.

Mr. Beebe tells us that during the year 1908 the collection of birds in the Zoological Park has increased both in species and specimens. The two most important accessions were from South America and Mexico. Mr. Beebe himself went to Trinidad and Venezuela, and brought home upwards of one hundred specimens, including representatives of sixteen species new to the Collection. A large series, containing Tree-Partridges, Anis, Motmots, Kingfishers, and other rarities, was obtained direct from Mexico. A number of these had never been seen in captivity before, and the study of their habits is yielding facts of great interest.

The Curator maintains that the Collection of living birds at New York is now the first in the world as regards number of specimens, and third in number of species. The authorities in London and Berlin must look to their laurels!

21. *Robinson on a new Flycatcher.*

[On a new Species of *Cyornis* from the Mountains of the Malay Peninsula. By H. C. Robinson. Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus. vol. ii. p. 163 (1909).]

Cyornis peninsularis, described as new in this paper, is allied to *C. oatesi* and *C. vivida*, but is considerably smaller. A male and female were obtained in November 1908 at Telom, on the boundary between Perak and Pahang, Malay States.

22. *Robinson on the Mountain-birds of the Malay Peninsula.*

[The Birds at present known from the Mountains of the Malay Peninsula. By Herbert C. Robinson. Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus. vol. ii. No. 4, p. 164.]

The energetic Director of the Museums of the Federated Malay States now gives us a list of the birds found in the central mountain-zone of the peninsula, where many interesting discoveries have been lately made. His list is based mainly on the very large amount of material now in the Selangor Museum, which, after the elimination of duplicates, contains over 3000 specimens of Malay birds.

Mr. Robinson commences his article with a short description of the various mountains of the Malay Peninsula which have been explored—twelve in all. Although the localities of these ranges are indicated and their approximate heights, which in one case (Gunong Tahang) exceeds 7000 feet, are stated, it would have been better to have added an outline-map shewing their exact positions, as many of them are not marked in ordinary atlases. Next follow the titles of the papers previously published on this subject, which are ten in number. We then come to the List of the Species of the mountains of the Malay Peninsula above the height of 2300 feet, altogether 242 in number, which, with very few exceptions, are represented in the Selangor collection by recently collected specimens of undoubted authenticity.

No new species are described in Mr. Robinson's article, but good field-notes are given in every case, and several very interesting forms are mentioned. *Rheinhardtius nigrescens*, the Malayan representative of the Ocellated Argus of Tonkin, recently described by Dr. Hartert, was obtained by Mr. Robinson on Gunong Tahan, but he does not believe that it is entirely confined to the mountains. Hornbills are numerous—six fine species occur in the Malayan Hills. Woodpeckers are also plentiful—the names of 17 species are recorded. Abundant also are Muscicapidæ and Pycnonotidæ, as in other parts of the Oriental Region. The splendid Hunting-Crow, *Cissa robinsoni*, originally described from a single specimen, is now found to be numerous in the mountains of Selangor, but is "very wild and hard to obtain." The Malayan Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula waterstradti*) probably occurs on all the higher mountains of Selangor, wherever *Vaccinium* and Conifers are found.

A detailed summary concludes Mr. Robinson's valuable paper; it gives full information as to the distribution of the components of the upper Malayan Avifauna, which is compared with that of Kina Balu, the highest summit in Borneo. But the Bornean mountain contains seven peculiar generic forms, while the Malayan heights have none.

23. *Salvadori on some Birds from Congo-land.*

[Piccola Collezione di Uccelli del Congo, descritta da T. Salvadori. Ann. Mus. Civ. Genova, ser. 3, vol. iv. (1909).]

A small collection of birds from Congo-land, received by the Museo Civico of Genoa, contained 30 specimens, which are referred by Count Salvadori to 27 species. Of these *Dendropicus gabonensis*, *Lophoceros granti*, and the very rare *Hypargus dybowskii* are pointed out as being of special interest.

24. *Sassi on Birds from Papua and Northern Queensland.*

[Bemerkungen zu den von E. Weiske in British Neuguinea und Nord Queensland gesammelten Vögelbälgen. Von Dr. Moriz Sassi (Wien). J. f. O., July 1909.]

It would appear that the collection of birds made by

E. Weiske in Papua (British New Guinea) and Northern Queensland from 1895 to 1900 has been purchased by Dr. Steindachner and presented to the Vienna Museum. But we believe that specimens from the same collector had previously gone elsewhere. Dr. Sassi now gives us a list of Weiske's birds and refers them to 45 species. None are described as new, but we see the names of such rare species as *Oreocharis arfaki* and *Paramythia montium* in the list. It would have been better to have kept the Australian birds separate from those of New Guinea.

25. *Shufeldt on the Osteology of Birds.*

[Osteology of Birds. By R. W. Shufeldt. New York State Education Department, Bull. 130. Albany, 1909.]

This 'Bulletin' contains a series of articles by Dr. Shufeldt on Accipitres, Gallinæ, Anseres, and *Coccytes glandarius*, with a bibliography of papers referring to the subject. These have for the most part been separately published in former years, but the illustrations are chiefly new and the subject-matter is worked up afresh. The species treated are chiefly North American, as might be expected; but the volume will be none the less useful on that account to our readers, and evidently forms a fairly complete manual of the Doctor's writings.

26. '*The South African Journal.*'

[The Journal of the South African Ornithologists' Union. Vol. v. No. 2 (Oct. 1909).]

The first paper in this number is by Mr. E. C. Chubb, on birds collected between Bulawayo and the Tegnani River by Mr. R. Douglas. He records *Buteo desertorum* from South Rhodesia for the first time, and gives notes on immature examples of *Numida coronata*. The second paper, which should be studied by those interested in the distribution of South African species, is on birds observed during a journey through Portuguese Nyassa-land in July and August, at an average elevation of some 1500 feet. The writer, Major

J. Stevenson Hamilton, Warden of the Transvaal Game Reserve, found the avifauna similar to that of the Transvaal Low Country, rather than to that of more northern districts. A third paper consists of Notes from Cape Colony by Mr. L. E. Taylor, and includes details of the nesting of various species, such as *Aquila verreauxi* and *Sula capensis*, besides observations on the distribution and capture of rare forms. Next Mr. A. Haagner furnishes us with miscellaneous notes from the Transvaal Museum, among which we may remark that the writer considers *Plectropterus niger* inseparable from *P. gambensis*, while he describes as new *Bradypterus congoensis* from West Pondoland, a form akin to *B. sylvaticus*. Lastly, Mr. F. Pym gives a lengthy catalogue of the birds of the Kaffrarian frontier near Kingwilliamstown.

27. *Spruce on the Migration of the Wood-Ibis.*

[Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes. By Richard Spruce, Ph.D. Edited by A. R. Wallace. 2 vols. London: Macmillan & Co., 1908.]

Although the late Dr. Spruce's Journals (recently edited by Dr. Wallace) are, of course, mainly devoted to botany, there are occasional references to birds in the narratives of that great traveller and collector. Amongst these is an account of the migration of the Wood-Ibis (*Tantalus loculator*) as observed by Dr. Spruce in several places between the Amazon and Orinoco, which is of such interest that we venture to reproduce it in this Journal:—

“The most remarkable migration that I have myself witnessed in South America is that of the great Wood-Ibis (*Tantalus loculator*), called ‘Jabirú’ in Brazil, ‘Ganáu’ in Venezuela, between the Amazon and the Orinoco—a distance of from 300 to 500 miles in a straight line, but a thousand or more following the courses of the rivers. The migrations are so timed that the birds are always on the one river or the other when the water is lowest and there is much sandy beach exposed, affording the greatest extent of fishing-ground. In the years 1853 and 1854, when I was at San Carlos del Rio Negro (lat. $1^{\circ} 53\frac{1}{2}'$ S.), I saw them going

northward in November and returning southward in May, and I had the pleasure of having some of them stay to *dine* with me. One of their halting places on their way to the Orinoco was on islands near the mouth of the Casiquiari, at only a few hours' journey above San Carlos. There I have seen them roosting on the tree-tops in such long close lines that by moonlight the trees seemed clad with white flowers. They descend to the sandy spits of the islands to fish in the grey of the evening and morning, *i. e.* before betaking themselves to their eyrie and before resuming their journey on the following day. The scarcity of fish in rivers of clear or black water is well known; and even were they more abundant, this very clearness of the water would render it difficult for fish-eating fowls to catch them unless when there was little light. Hence, perhaps, the Ibis's choice of hours for fishing; and the turbid water poured into the Rio Negro by the Casiquiari dulls its transparency at that point, which makes it eligible for a fishing station, leaving probably only a single day's stage for the travellers to reach the Orinoco. The Ibises, however, did not, as one might have supposed, turn up the Casiquiari, but held right on to the north, crossing the isthmus of Pimichin, and descending the Atabapo to the Orinoco. Some of them, I was told, would halt on the Guaviare, while others push on to the Apuré; the former lot, however, are said to travel chiefly by way of the Japurá from the Amazon. Those that frequent the Upper Orinoco return in May, and their halting-place near San Carlos is not at the mouth of the Casiquiari, but on the islands a day's journey below the village, so that they are at that season less persecuted by the Indians. If they went all the way down the Rio Negro in May they would reach the Amazon long before its beaches began to be exposed. But it has been ascertained that they sojourn awhile on the Rio Branco, where the beaches are earlier uncovered. Flocks of Wild Ducks sometimes accompany the Ibises, and it is quite possible that some of the smaller aquatic and riparial Fowls make similar migrations.

“ When the Ibises are roosting a shot or two from a gun

is enough to make the whole caravan take to flight and remove to some distance. But the Indians of San Carlos know better than to scare them away with firearms. They get into their canoes a little after midnight, creep silently up the river, and under cover of the night disembark beneath the trees where the Ibises are roosting. Then, when at break of day the birds wake up and begin to stir, and to be visible, the Indians pick them off with poisoned darts from their blowing-canes in great numbers, before the bulk of the flock takes alarm ; so that they mostly return to the villages with great piles of dead Ibises ; and, although this lasts only two or three days, the quantity killed is so great that, what with fresh and what with barbecued game, everybody feasts royally for a fortnight ; whereas throughout the rest of the year the dearth of provisions exceeds what I have experienced elsewhere in South America."

28. *Whympers' 'Egyptian Birds.'*

[*Egyptian Birds*, for the most Part seen in the Nile Valley. By Charles Whympers. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1909. 1 vol. 8vo.]

Our associate Mr. Charles Whympers has produced a very nice book, which will, no doubt, be in the hands of many of the visitors who go up the Nile this winter. Selecting fifty of the birds most commonly met with on the banks of the great river, he gives us artistic drawings of them and accompanies them with well-written popular accounts of their habits and manners. As stated by the author in his "Foreword," this does not claim to be a scientific work, "it is meant for the wayfaring man who, travelling through this ancient land, wishes to learn something of the birds he meets with." Mr. Whympers, therefore, does not interfere with the labours of several of our correspondents, who are striving to attain a full knowledge of the Egyptian Avifauna in order to produce a complete account of it.

As will be noticed by those who inspect the volume, most of the fifty species of which figures are given are well known

to British ornithologists. But they will be pleased with the dainty figures and brilliant colours—in some cases, we may perhaps say, a little too brilliant.

Among the strange forms introduced to us we may call attention to the Sand-Partridge (*Ammoperdix heyi*), which is a purely desert species. This, as Mr. Whympers says, “is a most charming, lively little bird, bustling about. You rarely see it for long. Even in January it still keeps in coveys, running along in and out of the boulders, and very quick and agile.”

It was rather bold of Mr. Whympers to figure the Shoe-bill (*Balæniceps rex*) in a book on Egyptian birds, its true home being far away on the White Nile, but, at all events, we are given correct figures of its grotesque attitudes, taken from the specimens in the Zoological Gardens at Giza.

In concluding the author gives a list of the names of the Egyptian birds known to him—356 in all.

VIII.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed “To the Editors of ‘The Ibis’” :—

SIRS,—I wish to bring to your notice that a short time ago, in dealing with my specimens of the Mediterranean Falcons (*Falco punicus* and its nearly allied forms), I quoted several books, amongst them the excellent work on the ‘Birds of Tunisia,’ by the well-known ornithologist Mr. Whitaker, who states that he did not include the Saker (*Hierofalco cherrug*) for Tunisia*.

Afterwards I recollected that amongst the numerous specimens of the Saker in my collection there was one that

* “I have never obtained or heard of the Saker Falcon having been met with in Tunisia, but it may occur there occasionally as a straggler, because examples of it are not unfrequently obtained in Italy, and specimens are to be found in most museums of any importance in that country” (Whitaker, B. of Tunisia, 1905, vol. ii. p. 138).